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WILLIAM & ELLEN,

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A TALE.

A NEW EDITION,

CORRECTED BY

THE AUTHOR.

Eaglesfield Smith, Junior, Esq.

Aufus quinetiam voces jactare per umbram
Implevi clamore vias : mœstusque Creusam
Nequiequam ingeminans, iterumque, iterumque vocavi.
Quærenti, et tectis urbis sine fine furenti,
Infelix simulacrum, atque ipsius umbra Creusæ,
Visa mihi ante oculos, et nota major imago.
Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.

ÆNEID. lib. II.

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1798.

WILLIAM & ALLEN

A TALE

A NEW EDITION

THE AUTHOR

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE
TO THE NEW EDITION
OF THE TALE
OF THE
WILLIAM & ALLEN
PUBLISHED BY
WILLIAM & ALLEN
1854



THE pathetic love adventure on which the ballad of William and Ellen is founded, has given rise to much controversy. Those who wish to determine, whether the youth's name was William, or Adam, whether the fatal weapon was the bow, or the carbine, or whether the lovers met in America, or in the wilds of Tartary, may consult the Gentleman's and Edinburgh Magazines, or rather the traditional songs on the subject; of which there are a great many, and are well known to every admirer of the old Scottish ballad.

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WILLIAM & ELLEN,

A TALE.

HE sternly strode across the hall,
And made his feathers nod ;
His face was rough, and mark'd with age,
His veins boil'd Scottish blood.

His child was fair as he was rough,
Fair Ellen was her name ;
And many a gallant Scottish youth,
To woo his daughter came.

The father's pride was all in gold ;
The boist'rous Irving strove
To gain her heart, but all in vain,
For William was her love.

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Her William was the fairest youth
 That Scotland ever saw ;
 Of stalwart height, as tow'ring pine,
 That decks the mountain's brow.

He wore a tuft of comely plumes,
 Which nodded in the air ;
 And o'er his manly shoulders broad,
 Flow'd locks of yellow hair.

His voice was soft, sweet melody,
 And oft' he sweetly sung,
 On Kirtle's brows, 'mongst beechen boughs,
 Which o'er his rough stream hung.

Here oft' upon the sunny bank,
 They met to talk of love ;
 And oft' by light, of starry night,
 They wander'd thro' the grove.

In Irving's breast what fury rag'd !
 And burning envy boil'd !
 He lusted for the lovely maid,
 But William made him wild.

He oft' among the willows lay,
 Beneath the rooty brows ;
 And listen'd while they whisper'd love,
 Each breath his anger blows.

The father's will he freely had,
 To wed the lovely maid ;
 But William was in all her heart,
 Sweet William all she said.

Her lovely face bedew'd in tears,
 Her father often found ;
 Oft' as she spoke of William's love,
 He spurn'd her on the ground.

At length he swore a solemn oath,
 She would be Irving's bride ;
 That very night, in spite of fate,
 Should lie by Irving's side.

Away she went all drown'd in tears ;
 She cross'd the dreary moor ;
 Where blasts among the heather hiss,
 And furious torrents roar.

Her William heard the solemn oath,
 His anger made him wild ;
 He curs'd the father in his heart,
 But kiss'd his darling child.

All guided by their youthful loves,
 Far from their father's home ;
 Far from the black wood's lofty tow'rs,
 In dead of night they roam.

All as they wander'd through the wild,
 Of darkling woods and moor;
 Until they heard the sounding waves,
 Dash o'er the Bowness' shore.

Oft' would they stay their fault'ring step,
 A death-like silence breathes;
 They start! but hark! 'tis but the wind,
 That stirs the oaken leaves!

They start again! "a lizard stirs!
 They thought a bandit' spoke;
 'Twas but the owl in yonder thorn,
 Or raven in the oak.

Yet still they start! 'twas sure some noise!
 A rustling in yon wood!
 'Tis but the fox upon the hunt,
 That smells the lambkin's blood.

Where heavy o'er yon misty moss,
 A heron sails along;
 Her maw is cram'd with croaking frogs,
 To feed her noisy young.

They onward pass'd with trembling step,
 To where a ruin stood;
 A hoary, grey, and gothic tow'r,
 Long nodded o'er the flood.

And now the lover's hearts did cheer,
 To find at length a place ;
 Where they might rest their weary limbs,
 They climb'd, and climb'd apace.

Wild as it look'd, the still abode,
 Of ghosts and spirits drear ;
 Nor ghosts and goblins feared they,
 Nor cruel father's fear.

But here within the mould'ring walls,
 A little shelter found ;
 Clasp'd in each others sweet embrace,
 They lay'd them on the ground.

'Twas at the hour of midnight dark !
 'Twas as a whirlwind blew !
 Young William woke, and shook with fear,
 'Twas Irving and his crew !

A band of bearded ruffians fierce,
 Had long by plunder thriv'd ;
 From man they nought but buffets had,
 By neck or nothing liv'd.

For nightly murders often hir'd,
 Bandit' by bandit' stood ;
 For Irving now, and proffer'd gold,
 To shed young William's blood.

But how to take young William's life,
 A valiant youth was he ;
 More bold and brave to sell the slave,
 Or drown him in the sea.

When fraight their boist'rous captain spoke,
 They tore him from his bride ;
 And bound into their vessel lay,
 While frantic Ellen cry'd.

She tore her hair, and beat her breast,
 O spare ! O spare my dear !
 O spare ! O spare ! the barb'rous crew,
 All pitiless did hear !

The swelling breezes fill the sails,
 They skim'd along the main ;
 With brim-full eyes fair Ellen look'd
 All cheerless, and in vain !

The wind blew bleak, now hollow blew,
 And whistl'd o'er the shore ;
 The curling waves now mount on high,
 And furious billows roar.

Each curling wave was tip'd with foam,
 Stream'd sparkling in the wind ;
 Huge clouds of spray shot thro' the sky,
 And left the wave behind.

Black grew the clouds, the wind howls loud,
Yet loud, and louder roars !

The waves they mount like mountains great,
And dash the rocky shores.

The ship it seem'd the sport of fate,
The crew all stood aghast ;
A lashing wave broke o'er the deck,
And bore away the mast.

Anon she mounts, and dives the deep,
Another lash comes o'er ;
And men, and shrowds, and tackle all,
Away with fury tore !

What horrors fill'd fair Ellen's breast,
She saw her William gone !
She saw the hulk, and all ingulph'd,
And sunk into a swoon.

But fate smiles on fair Virtue's child,
Thro' storms of life to guide ;
Kind Providence her William brought,
And lay'd by Ellen's side.

His youthful bosom swoln with grief,
Embrac'd the clay-cold maid ;
Her life returning, breath'd again,
And smiling Cupids play'd.

Soon as the purple morn shot forth
 Its bright all-cheering ray ;
 And melting drank the pearly drops
 Which, glist'ning, hail'd the day.

Up rose the lovely pair, resolv'd
 To leave the dang'rous sea ;
 They wander'd, till they stop'd at night,
 In fair Kirconnel lee.

But fate which brought young William back,
 Sav'd cruel Irving too ;
 And drove ashore upon a wreck,
 But drown'd the barb'rous crew.

Now furious anger tore his breast,
 The lovely pair sought he ;
 Where barkish Kirtle rolls his stream,
 Thro' fair Kirconnel lee.

Deep in a gloomy den he hid,
 Young William's life to take ;
 A twanging bow across his breast,
 And quiver at his back.

Soft was the eve when dulcet dew
 Descended light and calm ;
 The gentle lovers came to stray
 Amid the heavenly balm.

Still as they stray'd the banks along,
 Still list'ning to the note ;
 Like them, a little robin lov'd,
 And warbling tun'd its throat.

Thus sweetly down this heavenly vale
 These happy lovers trod ;
 From out the glen fierce Irving sprang,
 And boil'd his angry blood.

Unseen behind a hazel bush,
 He bent his fatal bow ;
 A yard long barbed arrow fixt,
 Upon the twisted tow.

Fair Ellen saw the furious youth,
 She saw the pointed dart ;
 Drawn to the head, the twanging bow
 Was aim'd at William's heart !

She knew 'twas Irving by his plumes,
 Swift as the arrow flew ;
 She instant leapt before her love,
 And Irving Ellen flew.

Out sprang the warm blood from her heart,
 Young William's cheeks grew white ;
 His pale lips quiver'd, gnash'd his teeth,
 All frantic at the sight !

Resolv'd to wreak his furious rage,
 On haughty Irving's crest ;
 Now melting all in grief and shame,
 In anguish beats his breast.

Then stooping o'er his bleeding love,
 He snatch'd the cruel dart ;
 And almost frantic in his rage,
 Had drove it to his heart.

Fair Ellen saw, with lily hand
 She stay'd his angry arm ;
 May angels guard thee when I'm gone,
 And shield thy life from harm.

Another word she never spoke,
 But let me ever lie
 In this same spot, my death and grave ;
 And clos'd her eyes to die.

Young William spoke all wild with grief,
 My love, I'll bury thee ;
 E'er long I'll lay me by thy side,
 In fair Kirconnel lee.

He now began to rave and rage,
 His riven bosom wrought ;
 With frightful dreams he woke at nights,
 And grappl'd Irving's throat.

Resolv'd to chace him thro' the world,
 The coward Irving fled ;
 Afraid lest frantic William's rage
 Should wreak upon his head.

Swift thro' the woods, thro' moor, and dell,
 He fled before the wind ;
 Spurr'd on by fear, he breathless ran,
 And scarcely look'd behind.

In Britain's isle there was no place,
 But William he was there ;
 Nor cot, nor cave, nor wood, nor kell,
 But saw fierce William stare.

As horror works in cruel breasts,
 As conscience goads and stings,
 So William close as conscience keeps,
 As close as conscience clings.

As spots of blood begore the hand,
 Of midnight murder foul ;
 Close as those spots still William keeps,
 And grasps fierce Irving's soul.

On hips and haws, on crabs and floes,
 He led a wretched time ;
 On hips and haws, young William too,
 Pursu'd from clime to clime.

Far as he chac'd him to the North,
 E'en to the icy pole ;
 Thro' stony Lapland's dreary wilds,
 Where tumbling rivers roll.

Nor yet among the furly Ruffe,
 Found he a place of rest ;
 Nor Dane, nor Swede; thro' Norway's wood
 Still William Irving chac'd.

Still as he pass'd thro' wood and wild,
 Thro' brake and murky fen ;
 Where darkling hung the drizzling dews,
 Upon the savage den.

No roaming bear had he to fear,
 Nor wolf that howls by night ;
 But William's arm was all he fear'd,
 And William was in fight !

Thro' hideous wilds and wilderness,
 Where hugest horrors reign :
 Where snows impending deep and dark
 A gloomy dire domain.

Thro' thick and thin, thro' wet and dry,
 Thro' den, and dank, and dub ;
 Thro' scratching briars, bush and brake,
 Their goary bodies rub.

Heedless of the impending rock,
 Among the Samoid race ;
 Till on the black and desert wild,
 Of roving Tartar fierce.

Oft did he wish their twanging bows,
 Would send a deadly dart ;
 He fear'd no Tartar's twanging bow,
 But William cow'd his heart !

Oft as they skirr'd athwart the plain,
 Free as the mountain blast,
 He call'd upon their rugged forms,
 And bar'd his haggard breast.

Their horses hoofs, mid rising sand,
 Oft wrap'd him in a cloud ;
 But still was vengeful William he
 Amid the sable shroud.

The skies grew wild with dire portent ;
 More sharp than mortal wound
 His passions rag'd, and rang a peal
 Thro' all his bosom's bound.

He panted sore, yet urg'd his way,
 His hopes were fading fast ;
 Yet in despair and furious rage,
 He bore it to the last.

At length he stop'd as lank as death,
 and William lank as he;
 Prepar'd to fight as grim as ghosts!
 A horrid fight to see!

Their bodies scarr'd, and scratch'd, and hard,
 They scarce a clout had on;
 Their hair and beards were long and rough,
 Their feet as hard as horn.

All filth they were, unwash'd and torn,
 Their bodies black with hair;
 And nought but bone and sinew left,
 To bide th' inclement air.

Their swords they scarcely now could draw,
 Long rusted in their sheaths;
 At last came out their iron blades,
 And furious anger breathes!

They to it go, now cut and slash,
 With all their might and main;
 They tilt and strike, they thrust and fight,
 Upon the Tartar plain.

But William's arm the strongest prov'd,
 By cruel Irving's fall;
 He hack'd and hew'd his mangl'd corse,
 All into pieces small.

In vain he try'd by such revenge,
 To hide the grizzly dart ;
 Which cruel Irving fatal sent,
 To pierce his Ellen's heart.

Now all alone, and all forlorn,
 And fore was William's heart ;
 Before his eyes still Ellen cries,
 Pull out this hated dart !

He thought of nought but graves and death,
 All torn, forlorn, and lame ;
 With riven breast he thought of home,
 And wander'd as he came.

Still on him, still his Ellen cries,
 In fair Kirconnel lee ;
 I come, I come, I come my love,
 I come to lie with thee !

Oft' would he fit him on a stone,
 Upon the weary waste ;
 A stone as hard as was the heart,
 That pierc'd his Ellen's breast.

Thus did he wander, wander on,
 Still nearer, nearer home ;
 And step by step on Ellen thought,
 He thought of Ellen's tomb.

And till he reach'd the sweetest spot,
 Where gods might love to dwell;
 But by the stings of cruel fate,
 To him was made a hell.

Here in the centre of the vale,
 There stands an ancient cross;
 Its trunk is grey, and old in years,
 And cover'd o'er the moss.

Against it leans his shatter'd frame,
 In fair Kirconnel lee;
 But still on him his Ellen cries,
 To bear her company.

He cast a look o'er all his soul,
 His young and happy day;
 The tears ran trickling down his cheeks,
 In grief he melts away.

Still leaning 'gainst the mossy stone,
 The prospect seem'd to gloom;
 His soul could find no resting place,
 But in his Ellen's tomb.

I come, I come, I will not stay,
 What folly 'tis to wait;
 He lay'd him down on Ellen's tomb,
 And there he broke his heart.

Let future ages know the place,
 There grows a lovely tree ;
 And spreads its arms o'er Ellen's tomb,
 In fair Kirconnel lee.

A slender poplar by it grows,
 With tender boughs entwin'd ;
 The guardian elm, like William still,
 Proves to his Ellen kind.

High tow'ring o'er Kirconnel's vale,
 A lofty tow'r there stands ;
 Rear'd in rude times of Agincourt,
 And all the plain commands.

Where brawling Kirtle rowls beneath,
 his dark and moorish stream ;
 His banks bedeck'd with aged oak,
 Where noisy herons scream.

Here oft' the furious whirlwinds roar,
 Up roots the knotty oak ;
 Here blasts athwart the birch tree's hiss,
 And lofty turrets rock.

Here poets lonely love to stray,
 'Tis here the lovers lie ;
 Here strangers come to view the grave,
 And heave a mournful sigh !

Here ever shall they lie in peace,
 For ages yet to come;
 Here wailing sorrow oft shall hie,
 To weep o'er Ellen's tomb.

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